



## SNAPSHOT

# Macedonian Wineries are Raising a Glass to Successful Entry into the Swedish Market

**AgBiz is supporting the Macedonian wine industry by providing capacity building and comprehensive competitiveness enhancement activities. AgBiz has facilitated joint presentations of Macedonian wines in various high potential markets by organizing specialized promotional events in Poland, Holland, the Czech Republic and via participation in the most relevant wine trade fairs such as ProWein Germany and the Moscow and London Wine Fairs.**



Photo: AgBiz Program Staff

A representative of a Swedish wine distributor tasting Bovin wines during the promotional event at the Scandic Sergel Plaza Hotel in Stockholm

***“Only through these types of serious marketing efforts and promotions we can convince SystemBolaget and Swedish importers of the quality of Macedonian wines, and interest them in importing our wines”, said Jani Bogeovski, Sales Manager at Bovin Winery”.***

### Telling Our Story

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Sweden has one of the most regulated wine markets in Europe, if not in the world, due to the state monopoly in alcoholic drinks retailing. SystemBolaget is the only legal off-trade outlet for alcoholic drinks, and operates some 400 stores across the country. Its buying committee analyzes local and international trends and establishes the range of wines to be offered for sale. The 485 registered suppliers can then tender for procurement listings, but their wines face stringent quality checks before they are accepted. Swedish consumers are becoming more in favor of fruity, fresh and non barrique style wines, produced by modern technology. In the new tenders there is also a trend toward organic wines and unusual blends.

AgBiz and Macedonian wineries have identified this trend as a great opportunity to penetrate the Swedish market. Therefore, AgBiz supported Macedonian export ready wineries to contact the most relevant Swedish importers and monopoly representatives. In coordination with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy (MAFWE), the Macedonian Embassy and the Economic Promoter in Sweden, AgBiz facilitated a Macedonian Wine Tasting event that took place in Stockholm on 27<sup>th</sup> January at the Scandic Sergel Plaza Hotel. Ten Macedonian wineries promoted 70 wine labels to representatives of 20 of the biggest Swedish and Finnish wine importers and distributors.

*“This was the very first successful and joint introduction of Macedonian wines in Sweden. I am sure that the cooperative efforts of this larger group of wineries will ultimately open the “gates” of SystemBolaget for Macedonian wines”, said Jadranka Kimovska, the Commercial Manager at Stobi Winery. The wineries successfully faced the challenge and convinced SystemBolaget that Macedonian Vranec, with its intense dark red color, lovely blueberry fruit aromas and flavors, and pleasant black plum jam tone perfectly matches their criteria and complies with the taste of Swedish wine consumers.*

In April, SystemBolaget announced that in their tender for 2012 they included demand for 20,000 bottles of Macedonian Vranec at an expected shelf price of approximately 7 to 8.5 Euros. This opened the door for Macedonian wines in Sweden. Ultimately, good sales of these initial quantities would ensure that SystemBolaget will expand their imports of Macedonian wines.

AgBiz will facilitate follow up on the contacts established and encouraged the trade department of the Swedish Embassy in Macedonia to coordinate a visit of Swedish media representatives, including writers of wine magazines, to the wineries that participated in the promotional event help them tell the story of premium Macedonian wines to Swedish consumers.